

# On Research...

Blogging about research issues at Ohio State University



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## A New Way of Talking Science . . .

Posted on May 15th, 2008 by earleholland

As wondrous as research can be, providing new solutions to old problems and answers to long-standing questions, the more fascinating stories are often the ones left out of the news coverage, the ones the public never hears.

Limited by space and a perceived lack of interest by the public, the news media often neglect the “back story,” the information that colors ongoing research and changes the experiments from sketches to portraits.

Like all other parts of modern society, science exists in a much larger context than simply the results at the end of the day.

Science is, after all, a process – not a product.

At Ohio State, “telling the tale” of research rests largely with a small handful of staff who scour the campus, looking for research that’s both scientifically significant and fundamentally interesting. And at a campus as large as this one, that search seems much like being a kid in a candy store. [Our website](#) offers more than a taste.

But along with the fun of explaining science, there’s a strong responsibility to inform the public of advances that can improve citizens’ lives. As a public institution, Ohio State is obligated to share its new knowledge with all who would listen.

And we’re committed to doing just that.

In this space, we plan to share some of that behind-the-scenes information, to make the picture we paint of how science is done just a little more vibrant for all to see. While we’re old hands at explaining research, this approach will be new for us. So be patient.

We’ll look for the sidebars, the spices that flavor the meal. We’ll try our hand at humor when we find it, although we realize that what’s funny to some is tragic to others.

We’ll try not to offend, but we remember that the great beauty of a great university is its diversity of thought and opinion.

Some may take umbrage at our “telling tales out of school.” For that, we apologize in advance because we know that some researchers are not comfortable with showing how the sausage is made.

Above all, we’ll try to be fair and honest and truthful, and share the lessons we learn along the way. And we’ll welcome feedback . . . (as if unsolicited comment was ever a rarity on campus). Let us know what you think.

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We believe that telling a broader story of science can only increase the public's appreciation of it.

Only time will tell. *Earle Holland*

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## 5 Responses to “A New Way of Talking Science . . .”

[Robert Killoren](#) // May 16, 2008 at 1:15 pm

This is a marvelous idea and a wonderful opportunity for researchers and scholars to share some of their most exciting work with the public and the University community. People who are not a part of an academic environment have not been exposed to the joy of discovery, the amazement of breakthroughs, and the satisfaction that comes from the hard work of scholarship. I am fortunate as a research administrator to have experienced these moments, at least vicariously, throughout my 30 years of academic service. I would love to see others share in this experience as well whether it is listening to a literary scholar who plummets the depths of a Dickinson poem, the social scientist who pieces together the stories of refugees to paint the misery of war, the astronomer who finds new planets, the biochemist who stumbles on an anomaly that suddenly leads to whole new understandings, the artist who explores new sounds and visions that touch the human soul, or any of the other hundreds of stories out there that our faculty can share. I look forward to a whole new land of wonder...

[Jan Weisenberger](#) // May 16, 2008 at 3:31 pm

This is a very exciting concept, particularly because blogs, by their nature, encourage interactive commentary and discussion. Research is not separate from teaching, service, and outreach; rather, it is fundamentally entwined with everything we do at Ohio State. Any venue that helps to convey the excitement of research and “demystify” its processes is a welcome addition. I’m especially pleased about the goal to make this site accessible to the public, and I look forward to the new insights that will arise from these new participants in our ongoing conversation.

[Norma](#) // May 17, 2008 at 7:47 pm

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[Meredith](#) // May 18, 2008 at 5:19 pm

Great idea! I hope to see qualitative research represented here as enthusiastically as quantitative. If so, I look forward to reading!

[Jessica](#) // Mar 22, 2009 at 6:48 am

This is a beautiful piece.....no doubt.  
I came across your site by random search and now reading all this info  
I'm so impressed that eventually I want to drop you a note telling you how  
impressed I am with the information you have posted here.  
I miss more posts like this  
Regards,  
[Jessica@forexfreedownload.com](mailto:Jessica@forexfreedownload.com)

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